

COAL MINERS RESTLESS.

ACTIVELY ORGANIZING IN THE ANTHRA SITE REGIONS.

THE MEN HAVE MORE WORK NOW, BUT THEIR PAY HAS NOT BEEN RAISED—THE PROPORTION OF FOREIGN MINERS INCREASING.

Hazleton, Penn., Sept. 18 (Special).—The numerous troubles in the upper belt of the great anthracite coal regions of Eastern Pennsylvania recently indicate a spirit of far-reaching unrest among the seventy-five thousand or more workers in the hard coal country. Were it not for other matters before the people the situation among the miners and their condition would enter the interest of a large section of the country.

In a nutshell the complaint of the men is that the prosperous times have raised them. They declare that they are working for the same wages as in seasons of depression, and their efforts for some time have been directed to securing an advance. It must be said, in a general way, that recently the miners have earned more money, but this is entirely due to the fact that the working time in a season has been increased in order to stock up coal in anticipation of the winter demand. This it is expected, will continue for some weeks. The companies of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company are now working on full time in the Scranton territory, and the next two months promise to be equally busy. Thousands of miners and their families see a ray of hope in the prospect of better days, and for the first time in a long while they are somewhat encouraged. In fact, the railroads are reported to be so busy that for this month at least they will have no cars to spare to be sent to the bituminous coal regions to transport coal to this section.

In the present situation two facts stand out—the most serious trouble exist at mines controlled by large coal companies, and the prosperity in the bituminous regions brought about by great changes in manufacture, is in a measure responsible for the state of affairs in the anthracite region. Since the great strike over fifteen years ago, the miners have seen some unusually hard times, and with the exception of the last few months they have been at their worst during the last year. If anyone were in the world a winter can be termed "dreary." It is in the coal country, and the miners are now aiming at an improvement of their condition by organization.

DEMANDS MADE IN SEVERAL INSTANCES.

In some instances requests have been made by the companies in the Lackawanna and Wyoming regions for a reduction in the price of powder to workers who want it for \$1 instead of \$2 a keg. They say that they could buy it in the open market for \$2 a keg, and that it costs the company only 60 cents a keg. Then there went the standard diamond car with six-inch tamping main-tubes, and still another complaint is that the charge for blacksmithing and supplies are excessive. In some instances reductions have been granted in the powder charges, while to others the officials have maintained that if this is granted it practically means an increase of the miners' wages, and that that is not in a position to grant this to view of the small margin of profit in the coal business, but it is costing more every year to mine coal, as shafts have to be sunk deeper.

THE MINERS IN SEVERAL REGIONS HAVE THEIR GRIEVANCES AT WORK LAYING THEIR COMPLAINTS BEFORE THEIR EMPLOYERS.

The state of the most active regions have been around Nanticoke, Glen Lyon, Durand, Pittston, West Pittston, Carbonado, Jimtown, and other parts of the Wyoming, Lackawanna and Lehigh valleys, but in the Scranton, Hazleton and Shamokin regions the men, while they have not struck, have been equally active. They secure for themselves the right to organize, and, second, to get an increase of pay on the ground that wages in general throughout the country are being advanced. They say that the mines are sent down at unexpected times, that for months their earnings are small, that they should receive a part of the recent increases which the coal companies made in the price of anthracite, that the times in the coal country have been getting harder since most of the individual operators of mines have been forced out of the business, and that the coal companies are driving anthracite to a large extent out of the market, that this is the reason why times are so hard in these countries while prosperity prevails throughout the entire bituminous regions of Western Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

THE COMPANIES' SIDE.

The coal companies have their grievances, and here is a sample. The average miner says a representative of one large company does not come off work six days a week, but wants a day off. Another works six days a week and gets paid less. He has a large family, and generally goes to the full extent of his earnings. We can pay you more wages. The cost of getting out a ton of coal is constantly increasing as we have to go down deeper, and the miners are getting all we can afford, though we do not say as they deserve the prospect of an anthracite coal or iron deposit on the miners themselves. Every article regards the use of bituminous coal by some of our patrons, and it often means permanent loss, and the anthracite miners of the community which depends upon the trade will be the last."

The last sentence is the greatest complaint to the average business man, and it is for this reason that the trustees who know the ways of doing a credit business with the mines during a strike will make an early move for settlement of any difficulties involving the men.

MINERS RAPIDLY ORGANIZING.

The situation is a considerable part of the coal regions, inhabited by half a million people is not peaceful. The miners are quiet, but rapidly organizing. The United Mine Workers Union is pressing its membership throughout the upper coal country. At several mines they called the miners to meet where union men should be employed and none. The men have been holding big and continuous meetings. Nat'l Min. President, Mr. Nichols, of Indianapolis, and other National officers have aroused great interest by their recent visit. President Nichols says that he is personally opposed to strikes, and he favors them only as a last resort. When they come, he says, strike will bring effect and until the last man fails in the courts we can secure neither justice nor rights.

Mr. Nichols is of the opinion that the men can gain many concessions if they stand together. The Min. Workers Union is strongly entrenched in the Indiana, Western Pennsylvania, and other states. It has thousands of members in Eastern Pennsylvania, and it is growing rapidly. County organizations are setting the mining districts and mining branch unions. Everywhere they are organized as a unit.

It is predicted that before Thanksgiving Day 50 per cent of the anthracite miners outside of the

Schuylkill region will have been enrolled in the union. During the recent trouble in the Lackawanna district some of the employers of the Shamokin region were asked to go out on a sympathy strike, but better counsels prevailed, and the leaders decided that nothing would be attempted in this case until the miners were thoroughly organized.

POPULATION OF THE REGION DECREASING.

It is a fact that the population of the anthracite country is surely decreasing, just as the character of its residents is changing. In one district nearly three thousand people moved away and left the State in the last year. There was no work for the men in the mines, and they and their families moved to the bituminous coal country, and in Western iron towns. These districts show a like falling off. All this occurs in the region, the whole time. When steady work was offered during the last month, many miners returned, and were soon secured by the men they wanted. Thirty years ago the Welsh and Irish miners predominated. There were a number of English miners, and the Germans and the Jews have taken their places, though in the sections there is a fair percentage of native miners who are first class workmen, and who are the sons of their fathers. There is a difference in their ages now, and in former years time was when a man had steadily won his place from the English miners. 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